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AUTHOR Heavilin, Barbara Anne
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ABSTRACT

A research project examined whether students in an English 104 freshman composition class would develop the ability to think analogically and divergently by using synectics as an aid to invention in composition, and whether these students would develop a more positive attitude toward writing. (Synectics is a highly structured group activity based on the invention and use of analogies and oxymorons in problem solving.) The 50 subjects in two composition classes wrote a diagnostic theme, completed questionnaires, participated in three synectics sessions, and wrote a final theme without a synectics session. Analyses of the data indicated the following: (1) most students used analogical thinking on all of the themes; (2) although most students used divergent thinking on at least one theme, few used divergent thinking on the final theme; and (3) most students had a more positive attitude toward English 104 than toward previous writing experiences. These findings suggest that students learned to think analogically, did not learn to think divergently as a whole, and developed a more positive attitude toward writing. (Author/CRH)

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The Use of Synectics as an Aid to Invention in College Composition

Barbara Anne Heavilin
English Department, Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana 47306
Instructor
Telephone 285-7234

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CS 208 409

Synectics as an Aid to Invention

Abstract

This research addressed two major questions: (1) whether students in an English 104 freshman composition class would develop the ability to think analogically and divergently by using synectics as an aid to invention in composition and (2) whether these students would develop a more positive attitude toward writing.

The subjects were two composition classes with fifty students, including eight case studies. The study followed these steps: (1) a diagnostic theme, (2) questionnaires, (3) three synectics sessions and the resulting written products, accompanied by journal responses and logs, (4) a final theme without a synectics session.

Analyses of the data led to the following findings: (1) that most students used analogical thinking on all of the themes, (2) that although most students used divergent thinking on at least one theme, few used divergent thinking on the final theme, (3) that most students had a more positive attitude towards English 104 than towards previous writing experiences.

These findings led to the following conclusions: (1) that students learned to think analogically, (2) that few students learned to think divergently, (3) that students developed a more positive attitude toward writing.

The Use of Synectics as an Aid to Invention in College Composition

This paper presents the pertinent findings from a study of synectics as an aid to invention in a college composition class. The first part defines synectics and summarizes the purposes of the study, the procedures followed, and the kinds of data collected. The second part is a report of one of the synectics sessions and a synopsis of the reactions and responses of one of the case studies, Sylvia. The third part presents in brief the findings and conclusions.

I. Definition, Purposes, and Procedures

Definition of Synectics

The term synectics, according to W. J. J. Gordon, comes from the Greek and "means the joining together of different and apparently irrelevant elements" (Gordon, 1961, p. 3). Developed by Gordon on the basis of observations of the way creative minds function, synectics is a highly structured group activity based on the invention of and on the use of analogies and oxymorons for the purpose of problem solving. In composition or literature classes, this procedure is particularly useful in providing a focusing device to aid in the understanding and discussion of abstract concepts, such as peace, love, or alienation.

Purposes of the Study

This research addressed two major and related hypotheses: (1) that students would develop the ability to think analogically by the use of the analogy invented in the synectics process and to think divergently by the use of the oxymoron invented in the synectics process; and (2) that students would develop a more positive attitude towards these writing experiences than they had had towards previous writing experiences.

Procedures

The study began with two pilot studies at Ball State University, one conducted Winter Quarter 1981-82 and the other Autumn Quarter 1982. The study itself was conducted Winter Quarter 1982-83, and involved two parts: those aspects concerned with the total group and those aspects concerned with the case studies.

The first part of the study involved two English 104 classes with a beginning total of fifty students. These students wrote a diagnostic theme (used to place them into categories: those who treated literally the epigram to be discussed on this theme, those who made A or B, and those who made C or D).

Students also responded to a questionnaire preceding

the first synectics session and two following the final session (one in class and one by mail). The first questionnaire was designed to provide writing background and attitudinal information; the second, to discover the amount of time spent on prewriting and invention in English 103 (the composition class preceding English 104) and in English 104, and the third, to provide attitudinal information about synectics and about English 104.

Data were also gathered from the written products stemming from the synectics sessions. These sessions followed the syntax of Michael McKibbin, Marsha Weil, and Bruce Joyce's adaptation of Gordon's synectics procedure in their "Model Summary" in Teaching and Learning: Demonstrations of Alternatives (1977), p. 72). This procedure is explained in detail and its use illustrated below under "An account of the sessions." In the four themes (the third of which was a revision of the second) in which synectics was used as an aid to invention in this study, students investigated the following concepts: the nature of violence, the nature of love, and the nature of prejudice. The synectics sessions which aided in invention for these themes were held January 19, January 26, and February 9, 1983.

Journal responses and logs accompanied these themes. In the journal responses students included the following information: (1) their reactions to the procedure itself, (2) their observations of the working of their own minds during the procedure, (3) their evaluation of the synectics sessions (that is, whether they were helpful and why or why not). In the logs, students recorded the time spent in thinking about the writing topic, time spent in jotting down ideas and preparing a rough draft, time spent in preparing the final copy, and any specific difficulties in understanding the assignment or in using the analogy. Also, each student was asked to provide in writing his observations of how he went about writing each theme and to submit all jottings and rough drafts.

The final data gathered from all students were themes on the concept of conformity or of time, in preparation for which the instructor did not use synectics as an aid to invention. These themes were accompanied by journal responses to the theme topic itself and logs which included items one through five from the above list. All themes were assessed by an outside evaluator to determine whether students had used an analogy or oxymoron and, if they had used an analogy or oxymoron, how well they had integrated the figure or

figures into their themes. All five themes were evaluated, that is, for signs of analogical or divergent thinking.

In addition to these data gathered from all of the students, I kept logs to record what happened during the sessions, my observations of class reactions in general, and my reactions to the sessions.

The second part of this study involved eight students (later reduced to five) chosen randomly from four groups into which the students in the two composition classes had been placed. The first of these groups consisted of those students who had taken a remedial freshman composition course. The remainder of the groups were categorized on the basis of the diagnostic essay as follows: those who treated literally the epigram to be discussed on the diagnostic theme, those who received A or B on the diagnostic theme, and those who received C or D on the diagnostic theme.

As the instructor, my log was constructed so that it recorded the observations of students' responses and reactions to the synectics sessions, questions they asked during preparation of their themes, questions asked them during preparation of their themes, and any evidence of their misunderstanding of the assignments. I also kept all jottings and rough drafts which these students produced.

II. Report of One of the Synectics Sessions and a Synopsis of One of the Case Studies

Report of the Second Synectics Session

Before the sessions. Groundwork for these sessions had been laid earlier in the quarter in discussions of the advantages and limitations of the use of analogy as it was presented, illustrated, and used by James A. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln in Writing: A College Handbook. Their presentation of analogy was brief and not very useful except to point out the dangers inherent in taking an analogy too far. These authors' own use of analogy, however, provided an example of the point-by-point comparison necessary to the skillful use of this figure. Comparing good writing to a well-marked road, they provided an excerpt from an essay to illustrate how the general and specific signs in writing, like the general and specific road signs, worked together to keep the reader headed in the right direction and attentive to the topic at hand (Heffernan and Lincoln, 1982, p. 31).

Preparation for all of the synectics sessions began the day before, with study and discussion of poems dealing with the concept which was to be the topic of the next day's session. On the day preceding the second session, for

example, the class discussed the concept of love as it was presented in four poems: Robert Hayden's "Those Winter Sundays," Adrienne Rich's "Living in Sin," John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," and Robert Burns's "A Red, Red Rose."

An account of one of the second sessions: The second synectics sessions took place on January 26, 1983, during the regular fifty-minute class periods at 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. in Carmichael Hall, Ball State University. Procedures for all of the sessions followed McKibbin, Weil, and Joyce's adaptation of Gordon's procedures (1977, p. 72) which is explained and illustrated below. These procedures followed this syntax: (a) Presentation of Situation, (b) Evocative Questions, (c) Direct Analogy, (d) Personal Analogy, (e) Compressed Conflict (Oxymoron), (f) Resulting Analogy, and (g) Application.

A. PRESENTATION OF SITUATION

The presentation of the situation always began with the writing assignment because it was of central importance. The classes were assigned a four- to five-hundred word essay on a concept, the first essay on the concept of violence, the second and third on love, and the fourth on prejudice. In these essays students were to use the analogy and oxymoron

invented in the synectics session as a leitmotif and the poems dealing with the concept as evidence. Following the assignment, the classes reviewed the poems which they had studied and discussed the previous day.

B. EVOCATIVE QUESTIONS

The purpose of evocative questions was to center attention on the nature of love. Following are the questions I asked and one section's responses:

(1) What are the characteristics of love?

Section One responses: giving, gentle, caring, sharing, unconditional, joyous

(2) What is the function of love personally, socially, ethically?

Section One responses: blinds, binds, forgives, understands, endures

(3) What does love look like?

Section One responses: pink and fluffy, beautiful, soft, happy, bright

(4) What are its feelings and actions?

Section One responses: tender, warm, generous, outgoing, protective

C. DIRECT ANALOGY

Direct analogy began a progression which removed participants to a distance from the situation at hand in order to refocus on the situation later. The purpose was to achieve a new way of seeing an old problem which might lead to a better understanding.

I first explained this metaphorical progression to the students and told them that we were purposefully moving to a distance from the concept of love in order to see it from a different perspective. I asked the following question:

What element is love like?

Section One responses: air, oxygen, gold, water, fire

After the class ceased naming elements, I asked which element they would choose as the best analogy for love. Water and fire were named. As a part of the process of consensus, the students who suggested these elements discussed the merits of each to illuminate the concept of love. After these discussions, I again asked the class which of the elements they would choose as the best for the analogy. The class chose fire by consensus.

D. PERSONAL ANALOGY

The purpose of the personal analogy was to achieve personal involvement with the problem. In this phase students

imagined themselves as a part of the problem. The syntax and responses to this phase follow:

To Section One: Be fire. As fire, how do you look, feel, and act?

Responses: red, orange, continually moving, warm, inviting, dangerous, hungry, consuming, hot, powerful, dependent, confident

E. OXYMORONS

In the fifth step, the class invented on the basis of the personal analogies what Gordon calls compressed conflicts and what I have chosen to call by their literary designation--oxymorons, contradictory noun-adjective combinations which jar or conflict with each other, thus forcing one to think paradoxically, divergently.

Continuing the process of achieving a distance from the situation at hand, the oxymoron provided a divergent, paradoxical viewpoint. This phase forced a very sharp focus on the situation because it demanded a reconciliation of opposites. The class invented oxymorons by placing antonyms with each of the descriptions under Personal Analogy.

Section One's oxymorons for fire as an analogy for love: Blue-red, translucent orange, still movement, frigid warmth, safe danger, full hunger, consuming gift, hot

coldness, powerful weakness, independent dependence, unsure confidence, inviting rejection

After discussion of the merits of each oxymoron to illuminate the concept of love, Section One chose powerful weakness.

F. RESULTING ANALOGY

Completing the distancing process, the resulting analogy filled the purpose of providing a new focus on love. To arrive at the resulting analogy, I asked a question which began with the chosen oxymoron:

To Section One: Powerful weakness is like what?

Responses: a gun, a skunk, an ant, fire, alcohol

After discussion, the class chose fire, and the resulting analogy was: powerful weakness is like fire.

G. APPLICATION

In the application, students were reminded of the assignment discussed at the beginning of the session during the presentation of the situation: to write a four- to five-hundred word essay discussing the nature of love, using the resulting analogy as a leitmotif and the assigned poems as evidence. In this essay they could use the analogy, the oxymoron, or both for the leitmotif. That is, the leitmotif could be any one of the following:

Love has the powerful weakness of fire.

Love is a powerful weakness.

Love is like fire.

I always gave students the option, however, of inventing their own analogy and oxymoron if they found that they could not work with the ones the class invented.

An account of my reactions to the sessions. Because the syntax of the synectics procedure appeared workable and acceptable to students in the pilot studies, they should prove just as workable and acceptable this time. Nevertheless, I was apprehensive before each of the sessions because the leader in a synectics session was highly vulnerable. I would provide a structure, but I could not force cooperation. Nor could I force students to think. During the session, however, I was generally relieved since students participated willingly and freely. I was also gratified because they so readily accepted consensus as a method of deciding among options and because they listened to one another and occasionally disagreed without censure. They seemed to welcome the opportunity to cooperate rather than to compete. Students were much more open and receptive to new methods and ideas than I had anticipated. Taken from my observations and from her journals, logs, and questionnaires, an account of Sylvia, a case study student who took literally the epigram to be discussed on the diagnostic essay, is provided below.

Sylvia, a thirty-seven year old Black student, was placed in the category of those who took the epigram literally on the diagnostic essay. Mother of two teenage children, she had been out of school for nineteen years before entering Ball State University Fall Quarter, 1982. She had always wanted to teach school and had served three years as a teacher's aide and three years as a study hall supervisor. Although she was a very conscientious, hard-working student, she had gaps in her educational background, particularly in the use of the standard English which is required in college composition. This problem, together with a tendency to think literally, made the use of figurative language with the analogy difficult for her. She realized the difficulty and prefaced one of our conferences by declaring that she thought "English teachers just sit around thinking up ways to stretch people's minds out of shape." But she was willing to make the effort necessary to overcome her problems. She, therefore, often spent from ten to twelve hours on a rough draft, from ten to thirty minutes in consultation with me, and from two to six hours on a final draft.

An account of Sylvia's reactions to the second synectics session. Sylvia, like the group as a whole, was attentive, receptive to synectics, and open in her responses during the

second session on the concept of love. In her journal response, she commented as follows: "It [synectics] was helpful and made everything come into focus." Her observations of the working of her mind during the process were intriguing: "That it was easier and that I had been doing it before but I hadn't put a name on it." Later she made a similar statement:

> The synectics sessions helped because I could hear what others say. Synectics unblocks, gets the flow going, and makes it easier to write. I had been using it before but didn't know what to call it.

I did observe a kind of connection making similar to synectics in her jottings in which she enumerated characteristics of the concepts to be discussed, wrote down several antonyms, and used some suggestions of analogy.

To the third section of the journal response, which asked for her evaluation of synectics, Sylvia, along with six males and three other females, evaluated synectics as "very helpful." Table 1 on page sixteen shows graphically the evaluations of synectics by male and female for all of the synectics sessions.

An account of the process of invention for the second and third themes. In her logs Sylvia reported that she had

TABLE 1

EVALUATIONS OF SYNECTICS BY MALE AND FEMALE TAKEN FROM JOURNAL RESPONSES

	Session 1		Session 2		Session 3		*Final Theme	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Helpful								
Group	2	1	6	3	4	0	1	0
Case Studies	Patrick	Patrick	Patrick Brad	Sylvia Tammy	Patrick Brad	Sylvia	Brad	
Helpful								
Group	9	17	5	17	3	8	0	6
Case Studies	Brad	Sylvia Tammy		Melissa				Tammy
Not Helpful								
Group	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	0
Case Studies						Melissa		
No Response						Tammy		

*Evaluations of synectics which accompanied the journal response to the final theme assignment were unsolicited and voluntary.

spent about ten hours in prewriting, ten to fifteen hours in jotting down ideas and preparing a rough draft, and two hours in preparing a final copy. Below is her reply to the question "How did you go about writing the essay on love?"

> I used the new direct analogy--love like fire. First, I read and reread all poems, and wrote out definitions of the words I was unsure of. Second, as I read I saw the poems in my mind. One of the poems reminded me of a scripture in Ephes 3. (Bible) and I wanted to use this somehow in it. Thirdly, I wrote down what kinds of love each one (poem) was, and how love affected it. Fourthly, I wrote a rough draft. Worried over it. Finally, I wrote and rewrote the final draft.

The first paragraph of her rough draft follows, duplicated as nearly as possible to her original, including errors, brackets, and cross outs:

> Love, like fire, can be warm, passionate, or destructive. Love, like fire, can be a cold-hotness. We can see this kind in "Those Winter Sundays." Love, like fire, can be [all-consuming] or can take control over everything it touches as can be seen in "Living in Sin." Love, like fire, can be warm and cozy, or it can

make you feel soft and mushy ~~in side~~ all over. This type of love can be seen in "A Red, Red Rose." In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," love like fire is strong and endures all of lifes treats events.

Tightening in the final draft of the second theme and eliminating errors and rethinking weaknesses in the third theme, which was a revision of the second, gave more clarity and precision to the final version, the first paragraph of which is provided below:

> Love, like fire, can be warm, passionate, or destructive. Love, like fire, can be a cold-hotness. We can see this kind of love in "Those Winter Sundays." Love, like fire, can be all-consuming--it can take control over everything it touches. This aspect can be seen in "Living in Sin." Love, like fire, can be warm and cozy or make one feel soft and romantic. This type can be seen in "A Red, Red Rose." In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," love, like fire, is strong and endures.

An assessment of the second and third essays. The outside reader evaluated Sylvia's second essay as a 4 for the use of the analogy, which signified that she used an analogy and that it was well integrated into the essay; the reader

evaluated the essay as a 3 for the use of the oxymoron, which signified that she used an oxymoron and that it was fairly well integrated into the essay. The reader evaluated the third essay as a 4 for the use of the analogy and the oxymoron, indicating that both figures were well integrated into the essay. Table 2 on page twenty provides average assessments of the use of analogy and oxymoron by the group and the case studies on all of the themes.

An assessment of Sylvia's attitudes. Evidence of Sylvia's attitudes before and after her experience with synectics came from Questionnaires 1 and 3. A comparison of her responses with those of the group and of the other case studies is provided in Table 3 on page twenty-one. Unlike most of her classmates, her attitude towards writing in high school and in both of her college composition classes had been enthusiastic. Unlike her classmates also, she had spent more time on prewriting and invention in English 103 than she had in English 104. All of the other students who responded to the questionnaire spent more time on prewriting and invention in English 104 than they had spent in English 103. Table 4 on page twenty-two shows the average time spent on prewriting and invention in English 103 and English 104 by the case studies and the groups. The time spent on prewriting and

TABLE 2

AVERAGE ASSESSMENTS OF THE USE OF ANALOGY AND OXYMORON BY SYLVIA AND THE TWO GROUPS

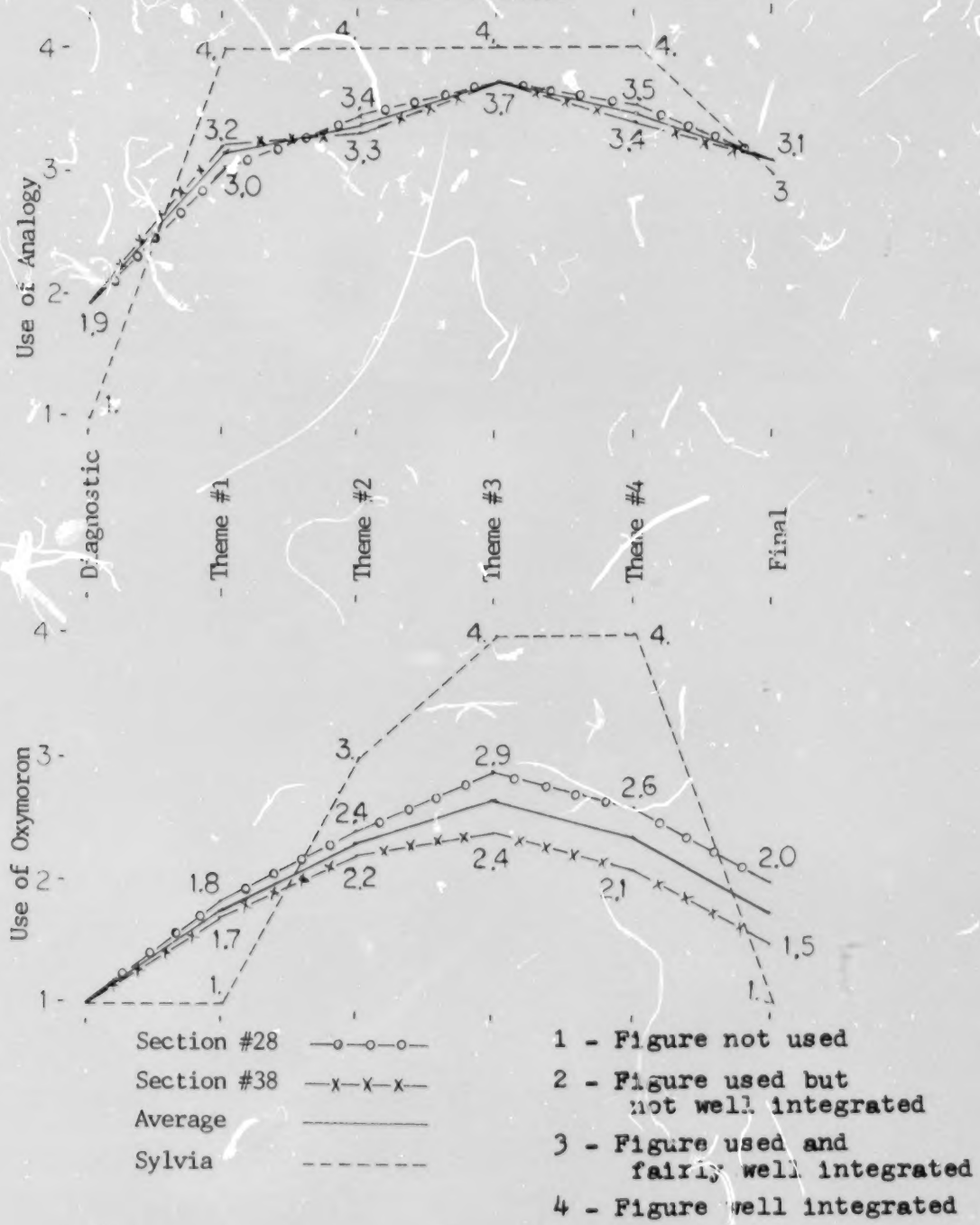

TABLE 3

A COMPARISON OF GROUP AND CASE STUDY RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS CONCERNING ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING ON QUESTIONNAIRES 1 and 3

[Questionnaire 1: My attitude toward writing in (elementary school, high school, English 103) was (a) enthusiastic, that is, I enjoyed writing, (b) average, that is, I wrote because I had to, (c) poor, that is, I hated writing. (On the third questionnaire, the student had the same choices of attitudes toward writing in English 104.)]

Questionnaire	#1	#3	#1	#3	#1	#3	#1	#3
Choices	(a) enthusiastic		(b) average		(c) poor		no response	
Elementary								
Group	25%	--	66%	--	5%	--	4%	--
Case Studies	Tammy Melissa		Sylvia		Patrick		Brad	
High School								
Group	14%	--	78%	--	8%	--	0%	--
Case Studies	Sylvia Melissa		Patrick Tammy				Brad	
English 103								
Group	22%	13%	69%	79%	0%	8%	9%	--
Case Studies	Sylvia Melissa	Sylvia Melissa	Patrick Tammy			Patrick	Brad	Brad
English 104								
Group	--	45%	--	55%	--	0%	--	--
Case Studies		Sylvia Patrick Melissa						Tammy Brad

TABLE 4

AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON PREWRITING AND INVENTION IN ENGLISH 103 AND ENGLISH 104 BY THE CASE STUDY STUDENTS AND THE TWO GROUPS

	English 103	English 104
Students in Section 28	average 1.9 hours (range: 0.25 to 4 hours)	average 3.3 hours (range: 0.5 to 10 hours)
Students in Sections 38	average 2 hours (range: 0.25 to 6 hours)	average 3.7 hours (range: 1 to 15 hours)
Sylvia	20-25 hours	15-20 hours
Patrick	0.5 hours	0.75 hours
Tammy	3-4 hours	5-6 hours
Melissa	2-3 hours	3-4 hours
Brad	no response	no response

invention in English 104 almost doubled the time spent in English 103, with all students considering this time valuable and well spent.

III. Findings and Conclusions

Underlying this study were two related hypotheses: (1) that students would develop the ability to think analogically by the use of the analogy invented in the synectics process and to think divergently by the use of the oxymoron invented in the synectics process; and (2) that students would develop a more positive attitude towards these writing experiences than they had had towards previous writing experiences.

Findings

(1) All of the case studies and all except one student in the two sections used analogical thinking on all of the themes, including the final theme for which there had been no synectics session to aid in invention. The majority of the group (62%) and four of the case studies did not use the oxymoron or divergent thinking on the final theme. While 69% had used the oxymoron on the second theme, 79% on the third theme, and 74% on the last theme, the drop to 38% who used the oxymoron on the final theme indicates that most students had difficulty with divergent thinking.

(2) Table 1 on page sixteen shows that all except one female found the first two sessions helpful and that all of the students except one male (a foreign student) and four females found the third session helpful. (The topic of prejudice was difficult for students to deal with, and this problem may have influenced the attitudes towards the third session, which dealt with the nature of prejudice.) There were also eight unsolicited journal comments accompanying final themes for which there had been no synectics session to aid in invention. These comments also indicated that these studentshad found synectics helpful.

Table 3 on page twenty-one shows a comparison of group and case study responses to questions concerning attitudes towards writing. The first questionnaire indicated that 25% of the group enjoyed writing in elementary school, 14% enjoyed writing in high school, and 22% enjoyed writing in English 103. While 22% indicated on the first questionnaire that they had enjoyed writing in English 103, only two case studies and 13% of those who responded to the third questionnaire indicated that they had enjoyed writing in English 103. The three case studies who returned the third questionnaire signed and 45% of those responding to this questionnaire reported that they had enjoyed writing in English 104. No students

reported that they had hated writing in this class whereas one case study and 8% of the group indicated that they had hated writing in English 103.

Another question designed to reveal attitudes on the first and third questionnaires provided an overview of the values the students had found in writing themes in English 103 and in English 104. Two of the four case studies and 65% of the group responding to the first questionnaire chose "fulfilling a college requirement" as one of the values which they had found in writing themes in English 103, thus making this pragmatic choice the top value which students had found in theme writing in English 103. This choice fell to second place on the third questionnaire, with two of the case studies and 38% of the group choosing this value. While "discovering and sharing ideas" ranked last on the first questionnaire, it moved into first place on the third, replacing the more pragmatic choice "fulfilling a college requirement." One of the case studies and 46% of those responding to the third questionnaire made this choice, thus making this choice the top value which students had found in writing themes in English 104.

Some students also provided information which indicated their attitudes towards synectics and towards English 104 on forms entitled "Student Evaluation of Teaching" which were

provided by the English Department at Ball State University. Required by the English Department and kept as a part of the instructor's file, these forms were unsigned. Attitudinal information on these forms occurred most frequently in response to the question: "Is there something your instructor has done particularly well during this course?" Of the thirty-one students who evaluated the course, seventeen revealed positive attitudes which might be directly attributed to the use of synectics in the class. There were no negative responses.

Conclusions

These findings support the first half of Hypothesis One, that students would learn to think analogically by the use of the analogy invented in the synectics process. The second half of Hypothesis One, that students would learn to think divergently by the use of the oxymoron invented in the synectics process, is not well supported.

Hypothesis Two, that students would develop a more positive attitude towards these writing experiences than they had had towards previous writing experiences, is supported by these data.

Implications for Teaching and Research

The general implication for teaching and suggestion for further research which arises from this study is that synectics deserves wider attention and greater acceptance as

a teaching method in college composition classes. Students can learn to use the procedure by themselves, and it provides an aid to analogical thinking (and, with some students, to divergent thinking as well). Students also accepted readily the process of consensus, and it provided an opportunity for them to express themselves, to share ideas, and to cooperate rather than to compete. It would be interesting to compare the effectiveness and affectiveness of free writing and synectics, i.e., to compare the quality of the written products which result from the two methods of invention and the students' attitudes towards the two methods. Also, a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of synectics training in enabling students to think analogically and divergently would be of value.

Questions concerning pedagogical and composition theory follow from these implications for teaching and suggestions for further research. First, writing itself seems to enhance the development of cognitive skills. How does it do so, and to what extent? Second, positive student attitudes towards the structure provided by the synectics approach may imply a cognitive or emotional need for structure in the beginning stages of college composition. Which of these needs, cognitive or emotional, is met by the structure provided? Or does the structure meet both needs? If students do have such a

cognitive or emotional need for an initial structure, how is this need best met? All of these implications, suggestions, and questions imply that students can be taught to deal with complexity by the conscious use of analogical thinking skills and that in doing so, they may also develop positive attitudes towards the writing experience.

Appendix

Sylvia's Journal Response to the First Synectics Session

I found it helpful to get my mind working. Hearing everyone's ideas also helped me to get an over-all view--not so one-sided, if I had tried to do it all by myself. It was interesting hearing the different viewpoints of everyone. Yes, it is helpful for an overall view of the subject. Sometimes I can get too boxed in stale--unwilling to listen--but this helps even out my thinking.

Sylvia's First Paragraph of Her First Theme

Prejudice is a trusting deception. A policeman, for example, is usually a trustworthy protector, but in "Southern Cop" he is a killer. And the boy in "Incident" believes he has found a possible friend, but instead he finds an enemy. Similarly, in "Ballad of Birmingham" the mother believes the church is a place of safety, but instead death waits there in the form of a bomb. In "Dream Deferred" the speaker has a right to his dreams, but instead the dream blows up in his face, and he is destroyed.

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